

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 31, 2010

Administrator Lisa P. Jackson  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Ariel Rios Building  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Lisa P. Jackson:

As you know, President Barack Obama issued a major disaster declaration for seven counties within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. However, the region has been battered by more record breaking rainfall, and the city of Fall River has been particularly hard hit by the recent storm. Additionally, Fall River has been addressing long standing Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) problems for many years and it appears that this federally mandated CSO mitigation might have played a partial role in the damage suffered by the city.


During the storm, an eruption occurred on Mount Hope Avenue and on Columbia Street in Fall River. Rushing rain water from the streets collected in the storm drains and ran underground into a three and half mile tunnel where it is stored until it can be processed at the sewer treatment facility, then subsequently discharged into the Taunton River. The holding tunnel in question was partially full when this storm began and additional rain water overwhelmed its capacity, creating a backflow on Mount Hope Avenue and Columbia Street, the lowest points in the system. The back pressure caused by the back flow forced water out of manholes and storm drains and caused tremendous damage to private residences and city property.

We request that the EPA investigate to see if CSO compliance and associated construction played any role in the damage. Additionally, if it is determined that CSO construction was a factor in the damage, we respectfully request that the City of Fall River and its residents be provided federal assistance for the damages they have incurred.

Thank you for your time and attention. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Senator John Kerry

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Congressman Barney Frank

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Senator Scott Brown

  
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Congressman James McGovern